

HEARING ON "MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL: AN EXAMINATION OF USPS'S STATION AND BRANCH OPTIMIZATION INITIATIVE AND DELIVERY ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS"

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I submit the following statement I made in the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia.

[Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia, July 30, 2009]

HEARING ON "MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL: AN EXAMINATION OF USPS'S STATION AND BRANCH OPTIMIZATION INITIATIVE AND DELIVERY ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS."

(By Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich)

As an ardent supporter of the Post Office, I am deeply concerned about USPS' financial condition and I appreciate the magnitude of the task ahead of the Postal Service to ensure its survival.

As you know, on July 16th, the Postal Service announced that 16 Post Office Branches in the Greater Cleveland Area would be reviewed for possible consolidation. After reading the testimony and the GAO report for this hearing, and after hearing from my constituents, I have several concerns. I am concerned that final decisions regarding each branch under consideration for consolidation will be made without full community participation and input. I am concerned that people in my community and communities across the country will face a significant and unnecessary reduction in access to crucial services. I have concerns about the private sector taking over the services that these facilities provide—because privatization of a public need like postal service rarely goes well. The review process must be done at the local level and must consider the unique demands on each individual facility to ensure that the concerns of the community, customer, postal workers and effects on the local economy are fully considered.

Mr. Small, can you please address those concerns? Specifically, how does the Postal Service ensure community participation in the decision making process? How does it use demographic and socio-economic data in making the recommendation to consolidate or close any postal facility? How do I know that any reduction in facilities will not allow private companies to take over the services that will be lost?

(he will give an answer that will likely not be sufficient to address the concerns)

Mr. Small, I thank you for your answer but I remain very concerned. I have here a letter addressed to you asking specific questions about the postal service's decision-making process. I would like to respectfully ask your cooperation in providing the answers. May I count on your help?

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, due to the death of a close friend, I missed a series of

votes on the FY10 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act and also two suspension bills—H. Con. Res. 127; and H. Con. Res. 131.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on the following rollcall numbers: 511; 512; 513; 514; 515; 516; 519; 521; 523; 525. I would have voted "no" on rollcall numbers: 517; 518; 520; 522; 524.

CONGRATULATING CONTINENTAL AIRLINES ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Continental Airlines on their 75th Anniversary. Continental was founded 75 years ago as a mail service by Walter T. Varney and Louis Mueller.

Continental has risen to one of the most respected commercial passenger airlines flying more than 2750 flights daily to more than 260 destinations on five continents.

They have been named for the fifth time, in as many years, as the Best Airline in North America at the OAG Airline of the Year Awards;

In addition, Continental has been rated as the top airline on Fortune magazine's annual industry list of World's Most Admired Companies for six consecutive years.

I would like to congratulate Continental and their employees on their 75th anniversary and look forward to many more years of flying to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NEW YORK STATE SENATOR OLGA A. MÉNDEZ

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to take some time out to honor an incredible community leader and important figure on the national stage, Olga A. Méndez.

Méndez, who passed away Wednesday, July 29 after a long battle with breast cancer, was the first Puerto Rican woman elected to state legislature in the mainland United States, serving in the New York State Senate from 1978 to 2004. She was a passionate leader and legislator that fought for not just the people of her beloved East Harlem, but for all people of humble backgrounds. We became good friends working for our constituents and while we may not have seen eye-to-eye on all issues over the years, there was never a doubt that she gave everything she had to public service.

Born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico in 1925, Olga earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Puerto Rico and eventually earned her a doctorate in education from Yeshiva University after she moved to New York in the 1950s. She soon became involved in commu-

nity issues and politics, going from being a Democratic convention delegate in 1972 and a deputy commissioner of the Agency for Childhood Development in New York City to the office of the New York State Senate in 1978.

The first Puerto Rican woman elected to state legislature in the mainland United States, Olga was soon on the frontlines of numerous battles to make sure that people were given the resources and opportunities to improve the lives of their families and their communities, no matter where their country of origin or their background. At a time when so few women occupied positions of power on any level, she smashed stereotypes and opened doors so that a new generation of leaders could be more diverse and open-minded.

In her 26 years in Albany, Olga brought in thousands of dollars in state funds to her district. We became good friends, collaborating together to bring not just city and federal aid to East Harlem and the South Bronx, but also private dollars to assist residents, especially families and seniors. As she worked hard to reduce truck emissions and the alarming rates of asthma in urban neighborhoods, she also reached out to developers on initiatives that would create jobs and expand opportunities for local business. Those seeds are continuing to bear fruit, most recently in projects like the East Harlem Automall and East River Plaza, a facility along the river on E. 116 St. that will soon open with tenants Home Depot and Costco. The fact that she was willing to risk her standing late in her political career to switch parties was just another example of her willingness to do anything for her constituents.

Madam Speaker, I will be among many in New York and across the Nation that will miss Olga's passion and straight from the hip commentary. I know that she will be leading the cheers in heaven when we see our native daughter, Judge Sonia Sotomayor, finally confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice. Thankfully, Olga's legacy can be found in her numerous legislative victories, including our state minimum wage, various worker protection laws and in the dozens of education, health and affordable housing projects that she helped fund. And it will certainly be remembered as we see a new cadre of Latinas ascend into our Nation's leadership circles, their achievements built on the foundation of expectations she helped create.

I am submitting a July 30, 2009 tribute editorial from New York's premier Spanish-language newspaper, *El Diario/La Prensa* which describes Olga's career and importance to our community.

[From www.eldiariouny.com, July 30, 2009]

A LEGENDARY PIONEER

As New York stands ready to celebrate one of its daughters joining the Supreme Court, it also mourns the loss of one of its most fearless leaders.

Yesterday, former New York State Senator Olga Méndez died at the age of 84 after a long battle with cancer. Méndez represented El Barrio and sections of the South Bronx in the Senate until 2004, after serving for 13 consecutive terms.

Born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Méndez understood well the challenges Judge Sonia Sotomayor has faced and will continue to face as a Hispanic woman. The judge withstood grilling from white, male conservatives and she will become one of only two female justices on the Court.